

Talking Points
Appointment of Brigadier General William Freeman,
Jr.
As Adjutant General of the Mississippi National Guard
Friday, March 21, 2008
Jackson

Mississippi is blessed with great patriots whose devotion to liberty, duty, courage and selflessness are amazing.

Two of the very best are with me here today.

General Harold Cross has served so ably as Adjutant General for the past four years; he has seen tough duty ... and never flinched.

I know all Mississippians share my deep gratitude and appreciation for his superb leadership in a time of two major trials: the war against terrorism and Hurricane Katrina.

Mississippi soldiers have played a critical role in the war against terrorism, just as our Guard a played critical role in

the immediate days after the worst natural disaster in American history.

General Cross, I just want to say publicly that without your leadership early on after Katrina the Mississippi Gulf Coast could still look like the Ninth Ward in New Orleans.

Thank you for what you've done.

Here in Mississippi we expect great things from good men, and my expectation is that Brigadier General William (Bill) Freeman, Jr. won't miss a lick in his new role as Adjutant General.

He had a 33-year military career before retiring – or at least trying to retire – from the Mississippi Army National Guard.

Forty years ago, General Freeman enlisted in the Mississippi Army National Guard, and took a liking to the

field artillery specialty.

In 1990, he became Deputy Commander of Detachment 1, 1st Cavalry Division, and by 1992 he was taking command of the 631st Field Artillery Brigade.

In 1996, he assumed command of the 2,457 soldiers in the 66th Troop Command, a position he held until his retirement in 1999.

He's had a distinguished military career marked by medals, awards and commendations.

He's also had a successful career in banking. Today, he is senior vice president, Chief Operating Officer and a member of the board of directors of Newton County Bank and the Newton County Bancorporation. He also serves as secretary of the Bancorporation, which is the bank's parent company.

He and his wife, Karen (who is with us today) live in Newton. They have one son, William L. Freeman III, a daughter, Dana Habig, and six grandchildren.

He served two terms as mayor of Newton from 1979-1987.

As I thought about who should be the next Adjutant General and talked to people I thought might be interested, I noticed in Bill Freeman not only a huge respect and passion for the Guard as an institution, but also a very high personal concern for our Guard members and their families.

These are perilous times that demand courageous people. The Mississippi Army and Air National Guard is a multi-faceted organization whose mission is clear: They defend liberty. They fight terrorism. They respond quickly in natural disasters. They keep us and our families safe.

General Freeman, thank you for accepting this vitally
important assignment and coming back into public service.

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